DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 435 561 SO 029 631

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TITLE	The American Frontier (1862-1917). Volume 5. Teaching with Primary Sources Series.
ISBN	ISBN-0-38240770-9
PUB DATE	1996-00-00
NOTE	184p.; For "The American Frontier (1785-1861)," see ED 431 642.
AVAILABLE FROM	Cobblestone Publishing Company, 30 Grove Street, Suite C, Peterborough, NH 03458 ($28.95).
PUB TYPE	Books (010) -- Guides - Classroom - Teacher (052) -- Historical Materials (060)
EDRS PRICE	Document Not Available from EDRS.
DESCRIPTORS	Intermediate Grades; Land Settlement; *Migration; *Primary Sources; Secondary Education; Social Studies; Thematic Approach; Thinking Skills; *Travel; *United States History; Units of Study
IDENTIFIERS	Exploration; Frontier Communities; *Frontier History; Historical Materials; *Westward Movement (United States)

ABSTRACT

This unit of study (for grade 5 and up) about the American frontier contains four elements: (1) a set of reproductions of documents; (2) a list of documents with their specific archival reference numbers and a brief synopsis of their historical significance to the unit's theme; (3) 15 separate classroom activities; and (4) an issue of "Cobblestone" magazine related to the subject matter of this study. The unit helps students develop knowledge of social studies content and improve their skill at understanding such information by introducing them to historical documents. This concrete approach used for the unit helps to advance higher level thinking and allows students to experience and practice the following: collecting, organizing, interpreting, and weighing the significance of factual evidence to achieve a systematic analysis of documents; comparing evidence from different sources; identifying factual information and separating it from opinion; identifying points of view and biases; and developing defensible inferences, conclusions, and generalizations from factual evidence. A list of additional diverse resources both for students and teachers concludes the unit. (BT)

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